



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**North Dakota Council on the Arts Announces New Board
Appointments**

The North Dakota Council on the Arts (NDCA) announces the addition of Melissa Gordon of Bismarck, and Emily Montgomery of Manvel (just north of Grand Forks) to its board of directors. They were both recently appointed by Governor Dalrymple to serve on the NDCA's board, effective August 2015.

NDCA would like to welcome Melissa and Emily, and give a sincere thank you to our departing members, Cindy Haider and Dean Opp, for their time and efforts displayed during their appointed terms.

The NDCA's board consists of nine members - one from each of the state's regions, and one member-at-large, each of whom is appointed by the governor for a five-year term. Additional information on each of the board members, as well as the regions they represent, is available on the NDCA's web site at <http://www.nd.gov/arts/about-us/board-of-directors>.

Board Member Bios:

Melissa Gordon has been drawing since she could hold a crayon to the wall. She has won numerous awards around the state for her realistic renderings and has many works in private collections across the country. She has had a number of solo shows and participates in many regional group shows throughout the year.

After over 10 years as a graphic artist, designer and Art Director, she has worked independently the last twelve years as a freelance artist and illustrator specializing in drawing mediums and a return to fine arts. Her work is currently featured in and on books, murals, greeting cards, rubber stamps and embroidery designs.

Melissa also enjoys teaching workshops and other classes in and around the Bismarck-Mandan area to people of all ages. She belongs to many local arts organizations and is a founding member of Bismarck Downtown Artists Cooperative as well as a board member of Dakota West Arts Council. In addition to her work as an artist, she is also an active member of the community and does volunteer work for many area organizations.

Emily Montgomery, a Grand Forks native, grew up on a Red River Valley farm and graduated from the University of North Dakota in 2011 with degrees in English and Music, and a minor in Nonprofit Leadership.

Montgomery's extensive involvement in the arts began at an early age in music, theater, and dance. This involvement continued throughout college with roles in musical productions by the now-defunct Crimson Creek Collegiate Players and singing with the Concert Choir. Simultaneously, Montgomery danced as a company member and maintained a rigorous teaching schedule at the North Dakota Ballet Company, eventually being promoted to Academy Director in 2010.

Upon graduation, Montgomery's commitment and passion for her state and community led her to remain in Grand Forks. While working as Academy Director at the North Dakota Ballet Company, she was instrumental in creating a standardized Cecchetti dance curriculum for the school while continuing to dance, teach, and choreograph. She also maintained her involvement in music by singing as an auditioned member of the Grand Forks Master Chorale.

In 2012, Montgomery was named Executive Director of the historic Empire Arts Center, a historic theater in the heart of downtown Grand Forks. Since taking the helm of the Empire, Montgomery has led the way through a number of exciting changes, including a partnership with the University of North Dakota to display their world-class art collections on a permanent basis at the Empire, the founding of the Empire Theatre Company, the renovation of the Empire's backstage space and subsequent concert series "The Backstage Project," the renovation of the Empire's basement and the resulting black box theater "Studio E," and more. Recently, the Empire announced yet another new program: The Edge New Works Festival, dedicated to newly-produced theater, dance, and music created by local and regional artists.

Montgomery is a past board member of the North Valley Arts Council. She currently serves as a board member of the Grand Forks Chorales, Inc., the Greater Grand Forks Symphony Orchestra, and the Downtown Development Association. She is also a founding core team member of TEDxGrandForks and currently serving as an advisory task force member for the Grand Forks Public Arts Commission and on the Grand Forks Arts & Events Community Vibrancy Committee.

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Counties served by Melissa Gordon (figures taken from 2000 census): McLean County, population 9,311; Mercer County, population 8,644; Oliver County, population 2,065; Morton County, population 25,303; Grant County, population 2,841; Sioux County, population 4,044; Sheridan County, population 1,710; Burleigh County, population 69,416; Emmons County, population 4,331; Kidder County, population 2,753.

Counties served by Emily Montgomery (figures taken from 2000 census): Pembina County, population 8,585; Walsh County, population 12,389; Nelson County, population 3,715; Grand Forks County, population 66,109

*Photos are available upon request.

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The North Dakota Council on the Arts is the state agency responsible for the support and development of the arts throughout North Dakota, and is funded by the state legislature and the National Endowment for the Arts.